

Governor Cuomo Signs Bill Updating the New York State Human Rights Law

Article By:

Michael S. Arnold

Brie Kluytenaar

On Monday, Governor Cuomo signed into the law the last of four bills aimed at strengthening workplace protections for employees. In mid-July, the Governor signed pay equity, salary history disclosure and hair discrimination laws into effect. Now, the Governor has completed this effort by signing into the law a bill that makes significant changes to the New York Human Rights Law. A summary of the new law and its implications for employers can be found [here](#). We blogged about the pay equity and salary disclosure laws [here](#) and [here](#). Finally, we summarize below the various effective dates of the provisions contained in these new laws.

Law	Description	Effective Date
NYSHRL	Prohibits discrimination based on natural hair or hairstyles	July 12, 2019
NYSHRL	Requires liberal interpretation of the law regardless of how similarly-worded Federal laws have been construed, along with narrow interpretation of the law's exceptions and exemptions.	August 12, 2019
NYSHRL	Increases the notice and distribution requirements of sexual harassment policies and training materials	August 12, 2019
NYSHRL	Creates statutory cause of action for discriminatory harassment	October 11, 2019
NYSHRL	Sets lower standard for proving discriminatory harassment	October 11, 2019
NYSHRL	Eliminates corrective Action ("Faragher-Ellerth") Affirmative Defense	October 11, 2019
NYSHRL	Provides that non-employees may recover for any type of	October 11, 2019

	discrimination	
NYSHRL	Allows Claimants to recover punitive damages and attorneys' fees awards against private employers	October 11, 2019
NYSHRL	Prohibits employers from including broad non-disclosure provisions in settlement/separation agreements resolving any discrimination claim (unless preferred by plaintiff)	October 11, 2019
NYSHRL	Prohibits employers from requiring individuals to arbitrate discrimination claims. (But note that this may be preempted by the FAA)	October 11, 2019
NYSHRL	Lengthens the statute of limitations for sexual harassment claims with the New York State Division of Human Rights to 3 years (previously 1 year)	August 12, 2020
NYS Pay Equity Act	Expands protections to any protected class and sets new standard of proof for "substantially similar work"	October 8, 2019
NYS Labor Law	Places restrictions on employer inquiry and subsequent use of applicant and employee wage and salary history information	January 6, 2020

©1994-2025 Mintz, Levin, Cohn, Ferris, Glovsky and Popeo, P.C. All Rights Reserved.

National Law Review, Volume IX, Number 224

Source URL: <https://natlawreview.com/article/governor-cuomo-signs-bill-updating-new-york-state-human-rights-law>